

**ANGEL PLACE
LEVEL 8, 123 PITT STREET
SYDNEY NSW 2000**

URBIS.COM.AU
Urbis Ltd
ABN 50 105 256 228

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Gerrit Prent
Senior Development Planner
Equis Energy
Unit 1, 36 Esplanade Brighton
Melbourne VIC 3186

Dear Gerrit,

SOCIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT ADDENDUM LETTER

Calala Battery Energy Storage System (BESS)

1. INTRODUCTION

This statement relates to the amended Calala Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) (SSD-52786213) at 474 Calala Lane, Calala (Lot 17 DP 629969). On behalf of The Trustee for Equis Energy (Australia) Ngumi 4 Holding Trust (the Applicant), this Social Impact Assessment (SIA) Addendum Letter has been prepared to support the submission of the revised Calala BESS SSD application.

1.1. BACKGROUND

In August 2023, Urbis Community Planning completed a SIA to accompany a State Significant Development Application (SSDA) to the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure (DPHI) (Previously Department of Planning and Environment, DPE) for the Calala Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) (the Project). The original proposal involved the construction and operation of a large-scale BESS including:

- battery enclosures, inverters, DC and AC combiner boxes, transformers and auxiliary components;
- a 33/330 kV switchyard;
- an underground transmission line connection between the BESS and the nearby Transgrid Tamworth 330 kV substation; and
- ancillary elements including site access from Calala Lane, internal access roads and parking, control room and staff amenities, warehouse, stormwater and fire management infrastructure, utilities, signage, fencing, security systems, 4 and 5m high noise attenuation walls and landscaping.

Following exhibition of the Calala Battery Energy Storage System (BESS), and in response to submissions received, Equis has amended the proposal to reduce the environmental impacts associated with the project. The amended BESS will be positioned on the same land parcel and generally within the same footprint, however the BESS will be smaller in size and will operate at a reduced output capacity.



Associated infrastructure such as the underground grid connection to the Tamworth 330kV substation follows the same alignment and is generally unchanged. Connection infrastructure at the Tamworth substation now includes minor extension works to the existing switchyard.

1.2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this addendum is to review the potential social impacts from the amended Calala BESS proposal which may have changed from the original design. Given the nature of the proposed changes (provided below), this statement provides a comment on the potential social impacts that relate directly to the proposed changes, including:

- Amenity impacts relating to visual disruption
- Impact to local character
- Distribution of impacts and benefits and its effect on community cohesion and resilience
- Traffic impacts related to congestion during construction
- Potential disruption to sites of Aboriginal significance
- Amenity impacts relating to noise

The assessment of these impacts has been informed by the methodology set out in the original SIA prepared by Urbis for the Calala BESS SSSA from the DPHI Social Impact Assessment Guidelines 2023.

1.3. SUMMARY OF THE AMENDED PROPOSAL

The following section provides a summary of the key changes proposed for the amended Calala BESS (Table 1) and the amended site plan (Figure 1).

Table 1 Key changes proposed

Original proposal	Changes proposed	Improved design response
Battery type		
Wartsila and SMA battery technology	Tesla Megapack 2XL	The OEM offers a fully integrated product with a smaller footprint, no need for auxiliary distribution infrastructure, a high track record of delivering projects on time, and proven grid-forming services beneficial to the NSW energy transition.
Battery enclosures and associated equipment		



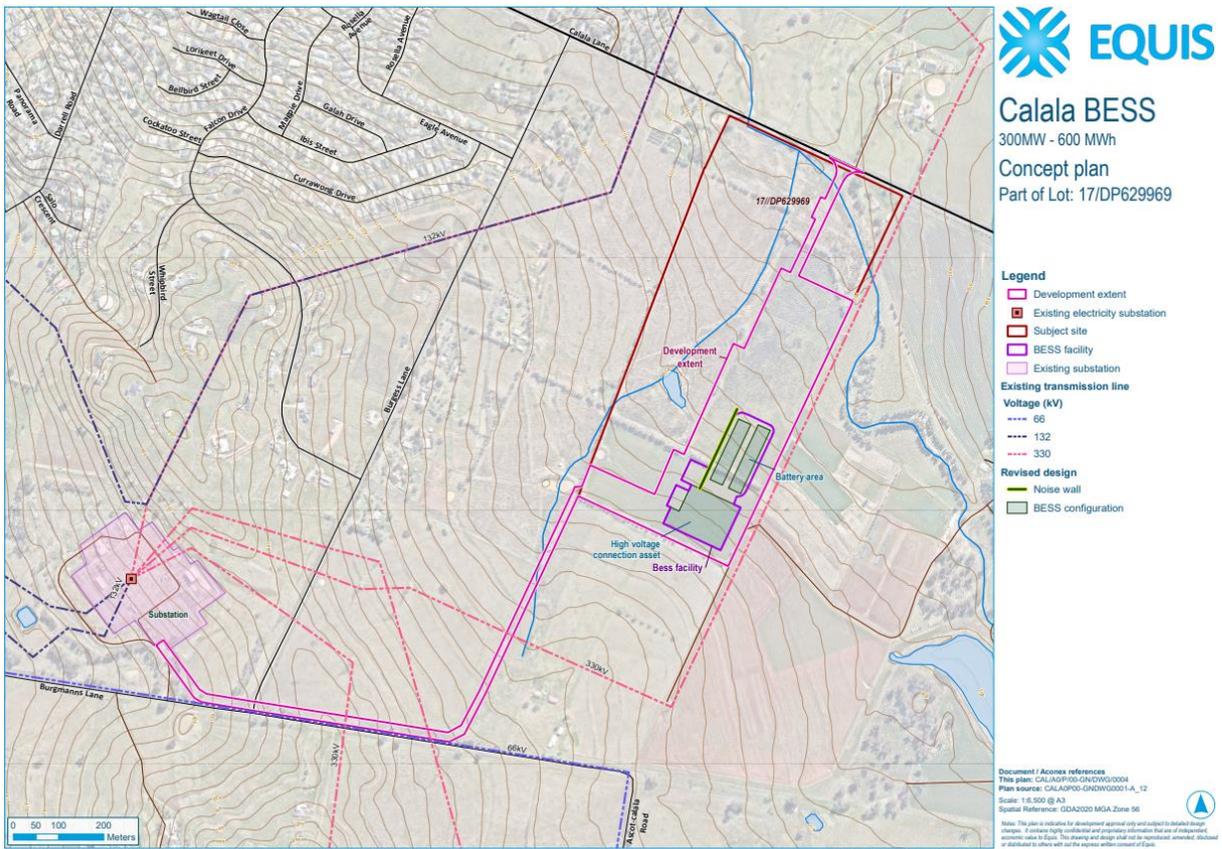
Original proposal	Changes proposed	Improved design response
960 battery storage enclosures 120 inverters and transformers 6 Ring Main Units (RMU) and auxiliary transformers	164 battery enclosures, 82 transformers, 16 Ring Main Units (RMU)	Fewer battery enclosures and battery area footprint reduced by approximately 60%
Battery enclosures 2.8 tall x 3.2m wide. Colour matt grey or other rural landscape colour in matt finish. Pre-fabricated Colorbond cladding	Battery enclosures approx. 2.8m tall x 1.6m wide. Colour white. Prefabricated cladding material.	Smaller battery enclosures.
Output rated capacity		
300 MW	300 MW	No change
Storage duration		
4-hour battery	2-hour battery	Reduced BESS storage capacity Reduced footprint
Max. amount of Stored energy		
1,200 MWh	600 MWh	Reduced BESS storage capacity Reduced footprint
Noise Attenuation Walls		
4m tall northern noise barrier	Deletion of northern noise barrier	Reduced visual impact
4m tall nearfield HV transformer noise barriers	Deletion of nearfield HV transformer noise barriers	Improved internal accessibility and reduced visual impact
Setbacks and screening		
Southern boundary trees retained but no additional landscaping or screening	5m landscape strip along southern boundary planted with new vegetation screening	Improved landscape screening and reduced visual impact
No earth mound. Greater visibility of noise wall.	Grassed earth mound approx. 130m long and up to 5m tall, located west side of western noise wall	Improved landscape screening and reduced visual impact



Original proposal	Changes proposed	Improved design response
Transmission line along southern boundary (Lot 17 - BESS site)	Transmission line setback 33m from southern boundary	Creation of landscape setback and screening described above, reduced visual impact
37m north APZ 26m east APZ 10m south APZ 22m west APZ	10m north APZ 25m east APZ 20m south APZ 10m west APZ	Project footprint economised to align with policy requirements.
Tamworth substation connection		
Underground cable connecting to the existing Tamworth substation	Connection to Tamworth substation includes associated substation augmentation and ancillary works as required.	Connection alignment to the substation remains unchanged.
Civil works		
Construction laydown in 2 separate locations	Construction laydown area combined and repositioned, temporary stockpile area added.	Improved internal accessibility
Significant amount of benching. Excess soil disposed offsite.	Benching reduced and soil retained onsite.	Soil retained onsite. Grassed landscape mound along western interface.
OSOM Vehicle movements		
4 OSOM vehicle trips	7 OSOM vehicle trips	Increased OSOM vehicle trips No change to design

Source: Equis Energy, 2024

Figure 1 Amended concept plan



Source: Equis Energy, 2024

1.4. VOLUNTARY PLANNING AGREEMENT (VPA) OFFER

During the development approval process, Tamworth Regional Council advised Equis of its policy to seek a contribution of 1.5% of the capital value for renewable energy projects proposed in the Tamworth Local Government Area, and that variations to this contribution percentage will be considered, taking into account the type, scale, impact, and location of the proposed development.

Pursuant to section 7.4 of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 (Act)* and Part 9, Division 1 of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Regulation 2021*, Equis proposes to enter into a Voluntary Planning Agreement (**VPA**) with Tamworth Regional Council (**Council**) on the terms set out in the letter provided to Council on 14 March 2024 (**VPA Offer**).

The formal VPA Offer to Council is:

Monetary contribution of 0.31% of finalised Capital Investment Value, to be paid as a lump sum prior to commencement of construction.

Council are currently considering this offer.



2. ASSESSMENT OF SOCIAL IMPACTS RELATED TO THE AMENDED CALALA BESS PROPOSAL

The following section provides an assessment of the social impacts which have been identified as relevant to the changes of the amended Calala BESS proposal.

Table 2 Social impacts related to the BESS amendments

SIA Impact	Residual impact based on the amended design
<p>Amenity impacts relating to visual disruption</p>	<p>The Landscape Character and Visual Impact Assessment (VIA) Addendum (Envisage, 2024) outlines the key visual changes associated with the amended proposal, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A smaller battery area (reduced by approximately 60%) ▪ BESS units to be white/light colour (previously darker in colour) ▪ Removal of northern noise wall and noise wall within the proposed substation, and repositioning of western noise wall ▪ Retention of existing trees along the southern boundary ▪ Setback of proposed infrastructure from southern boundary, enabling newly proposed landscaping along the southern boundary ▪ Newly proposed 5m high mound along western side of the project to be included in landscape screening. <p>In the 2023 SIA, visual receiver R9 was identified as the closest residence to the proposal, and the most visually impacted with a 'moderate' rating. A reassessment of visual impact from key viewpoints found no change to sensitivity for any receivers, a reduction in both magnitude (from moderate to low) and visual impact (from moderate to moderate-low) for R9, and a low residual impact for all viewpoints.</p> <p>Based upon the amended proposal's incorporation of several recommendations of the 2023 VIA, including perimeter landscaping and colour recommendations, and the reduced visual impact to R9 from moderate to moderate-low, this mitigated impact is reduced to an unlikely likelihood and minimal magnitude, ranking low negative.</p>
<p>Impact to local character</p>	<p>Noting the key visual changes discussed in relation to visual disturbance, the Landscape Character and VIA Addendum (Envisage, 2024) finds that the amended proposal has a smaller battery footprint, greater retention of existing trees, and allows for</p>



SIA Impact	Residual impact based on the amended design
	<p>additional landscape screening. These changes will have a corresponding influence on the potential impact to local character experienced by the local community, particularly neighbouring residents.</p> <p>Given the reduced visual impact of the proposal (discussed above), and overall reduction in the scale of the BESS, the mitigated impact to local character is reduced to a possible likelihood and minimal magnitude, ranking low negative.</p>
<p>Distribution of impacts and benefits and its effect on community cohesion and resilience</p>	<p>The SIA (Urbis, 2023) outlines the Community Benefit Initiatives under consideration by Equis as part of the Calala BESS proposal, including potential partnerships with key stakeholders and funding to support specific programs. As part of the amended proposal, Equis has proposed a Voluntary Planning Agreement (VPA) Offer to Tamworth Regional Council which includes a <i>‘Monetary contribution of 0.31% of finalised Capital Investment Value, to be paid as a lump sum prior to commencement of construction.’</i> Pending acceptance, this VPA offer could contribute to the proposed Community Benefit Initiatives or contribute to broader or alternative initiatives which would meet the needs of the local community.</p> <p>Noting the potential contributions of the VPA (pending acceptance by Council) to the agreed Community Benefit Initiatives, this enhanced impact remains high positive.</p>
<p>Traffic impacts relating to congestion during construction</p>	<p>According to Transport Impact Assessment (TIA) Addendum (Stantec, 2024), the amended proposal involves key modifications to the construction traffic methodology outlined by the Transport Assessment (2023), as well as responses to stakeholder comments from Transport for NSW and Tamworth Regional Council. Relevant changes include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Expected duration of construction works: increased to approximately 18 months, previously 15 months (refer EIS Section 6.7.6). ▪ Revised daily construction traffic volume estimates: originally up to 465 vehicles per day during peak construction period (refer EIS Table 34), reduced to a maximum of 220 vehicles per day. This is considered by the TIA Addendum as an improvement to the construction traffic impact. As noted in Table 1 Key changes proposed, there is also an increase in OSOM vehicles from 3 to 7, which the TIA Addendum states is minor and not considered

SIA Impact	Residual impact based on the amended design
	<p>significant in the context of typical OSOM vehicle movements generated by other renewable projects such as wind farms.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revised construction vehicle approach and departure routes: following discussion with Tamworth Regional Council, the proposed heavy vehicle access route to the site has been revised to exclude the Calala township located west of Burgess Lane. This revised route is anticipated to minimise the traffic impact of the development on local roads during construction, with between nine and 22 heavy vehicle movements anticipated per hour. <p>Given the reduction in total vehicle volume during construction, the revision of access routes following key stakeholder comments and the extended period of construction works, this impact remains unlikely and minor, ranking low negative.</p>
Potential disruption to sites of Aboriginal significance	<p>The ACHA and HAIS Addendum Letter (Biosis, 2024) addresses the additional areas of impact as advised by Equis. An extensive Aboriginal Heritage Information Management System (AHIMS) search identified 61 Aboriginal sites within a 8 by 8 kilometre search area, including two restricted sites which Biosis confirmed are not located within the study area. An archaeological survey of the additional areas of impact was also undertaken, and did not identify any Aboriginal sites or objects.</p> <p>The addendum letter therefore assesses that there is low potential for Aboriginal or historical archaeological sites to occur within the study area, and makes no further recommendations from those included in the 2023 ACHA and HAIS.</p> <p>Recognising this, there is no change to the mitigated rating of potential disruption to sites of Aboriginal significance, and it remains low negative, with a very unlikely and moderate magnitude.</p>
Amenity impacts relating to noise	<p>The Environmental Noise Assessment (ENA) (Sonus, 2024) provides an updated assessment to predict the noise from the revised equipment of the amended proposal. This included consideration of six operational scenarios, including typical and worst case operations during the day, evening and night periods. Notably, these predicted noise levels have been based upon the incorporation of a 5m high noise wall as part of the amended proposal, and on the basis that the area between the BESS equipment will be covered with gravel rather than concrete.</p>



SIA Impact	Residual impact based on the amended design
	<p>The ENA (2024) concludes that with the proposed noise wall in place, the noise from each of the scenarios is predicted to comply with the relevant noise criteria across day, evening, and night periods.</p> <p>Noting the amended proposal's incorporation of mitigation measures such as the noise wall, and the complying noise levels assessed by the revised ENA, this mitigated impact remains unlikely and minor, ranking low negative.</p>

2.1. SUMMARY OF REVISED SOCIAL IMPACTS

The following section provides a summary of the revised impact assessment ratings for the reassessed social impacts.

Table 3 Revised impact ratings for the amended proposal

SIA Impact	SIA (2023) Mitigated Assessment	Addendum (2024) Mitigated Assessment
Amenity impacts relating to visual disruption	Low negative (unlikely likelihood, minor magnitude)	Low negative (reduced to unlikely likelihood, minimal magnitude)
Impact to local character	Low negative (possible likelihood, minor magnitude)	Low negative (reduced to possible likelihood, minimal magnitude)
Distribution of impacts and benefits and its effect on community cohesion and resilience	High positive (likely likelihood, moderate magnitude)	No change, remains high positive (likely, moderate).
Traffic impacts relating to congestion during construction	Low negative (unlikely likelihood, minor magnitude)	No change, remains low negative (unlikely, minor).
Potential disruption to sites of Aboriginal significance	Low negative (very unlikely likelihood, moderate magnitude)	No change, remains low negative (very unlikely, moderate).
Amenity impacts relating to noise	Low negative (unlikely likelihood, minor magnitude)	No change, remains low negative (unlikely, minor).



Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "L. Hems". The signature is fluid and cursive, written in a professional style.

Les Hems
Director
+61 2 8424 5170
lhems@urbis.com.au